



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop
Michael Jackels

24 March 2016, 9:24 AM

Archbishop Jackels' Easter message

For a lot of us the practice of our religion is focused on belonging to the Church and going to Sunday Mass. Some do this for the social, business, or political connections that it affords. Some do this in order to feel good about themselves, or to think themselves better than others, or with the expectation of receiving something, like being entertained, instead of giving. Some do this motivated by obedience to laws and rules, hoping (expecting?) by their efforts to avoid hell and win heaven. These folk are more or less on the right path, headed in the right direction, but need to keep moving further toward higher, purer motives.

Towards that end, it would be helpful to read, study and pray over the Gospel, the better to know who Jesus is, what he taught, what he did, and what he asks of his followers. Inspired by that knowledge, we would then think of the practice of our religion in terms of love for Jesus, friendship with him, wanting to respond in kind to his no-strings-attached, over-the-top love for us. And inspired by love, our focus is shifted from receiving to giving, giving ourselves to Jesus, expressed in daily prayer, in Sunday worship at Holy Mass, and in forgiving any offense and giving to any need as if blind to who the recipient is, whether he or she is deserving, is aware of what this costs me, or is grateful. We would also certainly join the Church, but more: identify with a parish or community – this is where I belong, as we do with our family, sharing time, talent and treasure as a partner in Church ministry in order to continue the mission of Jesus. And just as in a family, where there are occasions when someone might do or say something to offend, saying sorry and forgiving is part of Church practice, including regularly confessing our sins to a priest.

These are factors that keep us moving further on the right path, headed in the right direction, toward higher, purer motives. These are ways by which we live out our Baptism, which had the effect of hiding our life with Christ in God, giving us Jesus as our point of reference, who directs all our thoughts, words and deeds. And our Baptism is part of what we celebrate at Easter, for by it we participate in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, dying to sin and living life in Christ, with the promise of an abundant life here and hereafter. Happy Easter!

Archbishop Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque
